

INTERIST

535 Arastradero Rd.
Palo Alto, Calif.

Aug. 1, 1960

Dear Mr. Waterman,

I learnt of the news which were given in Chemical and Engineering News, and which are essentially correct, shortly after coming here. I am sorry the newspapermen arrived first in letting you know them; and I shall try to give as full a picture of it as I can form at present.

As you may remember, Joshua Lederberg accepted our invitation to serve as consultant for the Pavia group, on the understanding that he could continue to consult with other concerns on subjects different from those that we can deal effectively at Pavia. There was no reason to worry (especially in situations like the present one, in which the areas of interest of Interist and Syntex do not overlap) also because we have sufficient knowledge of Joshua's loyalty to think that, should an overlap arise, and make the situation difficult or confuse, he would have dealt with it in all fairness.

On the arrival of your letter, I have rediscussed the whole problem with Joshua, and I think it is clear to him and myself that there is no conflict between his two consulting activities. On the contrary, we had just been discussing prior to this some developments which I think it well worth to pursue.

As to the amount of milk spilt, therefore, there is or there should be none, if we consider the original agreement was to consult on our own work at Pavia. In the course of our conversation on this topic, however, Joshua offered to resign from his agreement with us, if we felt this was the right thing to do. Naturally, in such a case the amount of spilling would be complete.

If you were thinking, on the other hand, on the possibility of more extensive collaboration with Lederberg, especially with a view to your proposed California laboratory, then the situation is different. But even perhaps if there had been sufficient warning of possible developments both of Schering and of Syntex in California, it might have been difficult to avoid the present stand of things. Then planned Syntex Research Institute at Palo Alto is somewhat revolutionary (and its outcome is naturally, unpredictable to a corresponding degree). Its origin is largely correlated, I think, with the fact that Dr. Djerassi has taken a chair at Stanford, which will become effective as of September, 1960.

The staff of the Institute will be made up of one or at most two independent research workers in each of the fields mentioned in the article. Joshua tells me confidentially that it will be devoted to fundamental studies in synthetic organic chemistry and biochemistry of nucleic acids, a field very close to his own research. Practical applications are hoped for as an ultimate byproduct, but are not expected to become a reality for many years. You will notice, also from the announced composition of the staff, that the Palo Alto Institute has a different setup from the one we have at Pavia, which is some guarantee of non-interference, and that microbiology has no part in it, especially as far as antibiotics are concerned.

In summary, I believe that we should be able to keep fully the benefit of advice from Dr. Lederberg, at least in the lines of work with which we are more prepared to deal at Pavia. I hope this will sound as acceptable to you as it sounds to me, and am anxious to know your reactions.

With best personal regards,

Yours sincerely

(L. L. Cavalli-Sforza)